



DEPARTMENT OF ELDERLY SERVICES  
*Community Services Administration*  
City of New Haven  
165 Church Street  
New Haven, CT 06510



Toni N. Harp  
Mayor

Migdalia Castro  
Director

Good Afternoon,

Senator Flexer, Congressman Serra, Representative Pat Dillon, Representative Megna and members of the Commission on Aging, my name is Howard Saroff. I am the Chairman on the Commission on Aging for the City of New Haven. I am here today to testify in **support** of Raised Bill #241. I am not only representing the Commission on Aging, but also seniors in the City of New Haven who receive these farmer's market coupons.

It was just about 2 years ago that I sat in this very same chair and testified on the importance of the reinstatement of the Rent Rebate Program and thanks to your Commission that has been done. I am hoping that with today's testimony the same thing can be done to increase the amount of the Farmer's Market Coupons.

As a consumer who uses these coupons I have found that over the last few years the price of produce in the farmer's markets has increased and yet the value of the coupon books has not kept up. Year over year, our buying power has gone down – and today we are asking you to protect our access to the fresh fruits and vegetables that sustain us now.

Our purchases support local farmers, who face their own rising costs, which helps to support local, Connecticut jobs. Not only does this program provide us with good, healthy food we may not otherwise afford, but every booklet of senior farmer's market coupons are dollars in the pocket of small Connecticut farmers.

In addition, our local farmer's markets often double the value of SNAP and senior vouchers – meaning that adding another voucher to this program can have twice the impact.

One advantage that we have in New Haven is the Traveling Farmer's Market, run by the non-profit group City Seed. One of the places that traveling market visits is Bella Vista, a senior housing community of hundreds of senior residents. It comes every Friday from July thru October. It is very helpful for those people who cannot travel to one of the other farmer's markets or venture out to visit a healthy grocery within the city.

Increasing the value of the farmer's market coupons is needed and would be beneficial to the consumer – for senior residents in real need of healthy food, every penny helps.

Sincerely,  
Howard Saroff  
Chairman, New Haven Commission on Aging

**NEW HAVEN** IT ALL HAPPENS HERE

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